A Vindication

OF AN

UNDERTAKING

OF

Certain Gentlemen,

In Order to the Suppressing of

DEBAUCHERY,

AND

PROFANENESS.

Edward Fowler
By ye right Rev^d^ ye L^d^ Bp of Gloucester.

LONDON,
Printed in the YEAR, 1692.

THE PREFACE.

THat which follows, *had, for the ſubſtance of it, appear'd abroad before now, but for the ſtrange Imprudence of a Printer, and baſe Treachery of a certain Licenſer; who was intruſted by him (wholly unawares to the* Writer) *with an imperfect Copy, which was promiſed to be returned home again, to have added or altered what ſhould be thought fit.*

And whoſoever ſhall be Offended at what is here Publiſhed, as taking themſelves to be diſobliged by it, I aſſure them it is not written from the leaſt Ill-Will *to any Perſon in the World, but from the greateſt* Good-Will; *and that not onely to the beſt of* Cauſes, *but alſo to thoſe* Men *who are moſt like to be* incenſed.

Methinks I hear now our cautious Politico's asking, What ayls this Perſon to be thus Buſily Interpoſing in the Behalf of thoſe, *who muſt needs by their extraordinary Zeal be Expoſing themſelves to the high Diſpleaſure of* ſome, *and the Cenſures of* others, *as a ſort of Hot-headed and Raſh Men? But if they'll vouchſafe to read what is here written, I hope they'll ſee no juſt Cauſe to Accuſe him of being Over-Buſy. But indeed, tho' the Apoſtle ſaith,* It is good to be always zealouſly affected in a good thing: *And tho' their cool Wiſdomſhips can be as Hot as their Neighbours in their* own *Concerns, yet 'tis ordinary with many of them, to paſs ſly Reflexions upon all Religious Zeal. But why Zeal ſhould not* beſt *become a Cauſe, wherein the Honour of Almighty God is moſt highly concerned, and our Country-Mens Happineſs in the World to come, and* this *World too, they are too Wiſe to offer at a Reaſon.*

But they'll Object, That the Ill-timeing *of a good thing will make it Chargeable with Indiſcretion. And who knows not this? But how*

can Zeal for ſo good a thing as the Reformation of our Manners, be ever Ill-timed? *What is Abſolutely neceſſary, 'tis impoſſible ſhould be ſet about Unſeaſonably. And it Argues a mighty Diſtruſt of the Divine Providence, to fear, from the Angering of the Vicious Part of the Kingdom, any Evil that can be greater, than the Good of ſuppreſſing Vice, or ſo great. Nay, this ſavours of downright Infidelity and Irreligion. Nor ſeems it much* leſs *Culpable to think, That the diſobliging of Wicked Men will be a weakning of this Government. For 'tis ſo far from being true that* the Governments giving all poſſible Diſcouragement to Vice *may be a Means to endanger it, that nothing can conduce more to the ſtrengthening and ſecuring thereof, nor ſo much neither; and that* naturally, *as well as through the Bleſſing of God Almighty. Honeſt* Tully *hath told us as much as this comes to. The Offence which profane and vicious Men may take at the Government, is a meer* Scare-Crow; *For ſo long as they ſee it for their* Intereſt *to Adhere to it, there is no Fear but they* will; *and they'll put on a ſhew of being Reformed, nay and Ape a* Zeal *too for Reformation, rather than hazard their Preferments under it, or their Prince's Favour: And 'tis certain that the Government can be ſecure of* ſuch *no* longer *than their* Intereſt *holds them faſt to it, tho' their Vices ſhould be never ſo much connived at. But it hath been much obſerved both in City & Country, that thoſe whoſe Converſations are none of the ſtricteſt, did yet upon this Execution of the Laws with ſome Briskneſs, expreſs great* liking *of it, in hopes of having for the future, their Children and Servants under* better *Government. And the Truth is, the Height of Viciouſneſs, to which the Youth of this Nation, and eſpecially of this City, are arrived, is a moſt Melancholly Subject to reflect upon; but not to be* Wondred *at any more, than that bad* Examples *ſhould be more powerful than good* Precepts. *And this preſents us with as ſad a Proſpect, of the Age's being ſtill* more *and* more *Corrupted, and of the* next *Ages proving* worſe *than* this, *if* more *Time ſhould be loſt, and the ſetting in great earneſt on the Work of Reformation be longer delayed. And I need not add, that the longer it is ſo, the Work will every Year be the more difficult.*

A Vin-

A Vindication

OF AN

Undertaking of Certain Gentlemen, &c.

THE moſt deplorable Degeneracy of this Nation in its Morals, occaſioned by the Encouragement, which for many years together, (for a well-known Reaſon) was given to Vice, raiſed in the minds of ſerious People, very ſtrong Apprehenſions of approaching Judgments; and accordingly very great ones came down upon us; and *Two* ſuch, as no Age hath parallell'd in theſe Kingdoms, within a few years after the Return of King *Charles*. But thoſe having produced nothing of Reformation, they were followed with others from time to time; and theſe likewiſe being loſt upon us, at length we had all the reaſon in the World to look for the heavieſt Calamities that could befal us, *viz.* **Popery** and **Slavery**; but when theſe were at the door and juſt entring, ſo infinitely Merciful was He to us, *Whoſe ways are not as our ways, nor whoſe thoughts as ours*, as ſtrangely to ſurprize us with a happy Deliverance.

And the bleſſed Inſtrument thereof, with His moſt Virtuous Conſort, being by God's wonderful Providence plac'd on the Throne, never were ſo great Hopes conceived as *now*, of an effectual Reformation,

But alas, in a ſhort time it was too apparent, that this Deliverance

rance came too ſoon, to be much valued by ſuch a People, as generally *We* were. It found us miſerably unqualified to receive it, and the Returns we have made to the Divine Goodneſs for it, ſpeak us no leſs unworthy of the continuance of it. For neither hath the Firſt Part of the Deliverance, nor the many amazing things God Almighty hath ſince done, both at home and abroad, towards the perfecting and ſecuring thereof, had any *viſible* good Effect upon us. But thoſe Vices which before reigned, and cryed to Heaven for Vengeance, do reign ſtill as much as ever; and thoſe who were *filthy before*, let God uſe never ſo powerful Means for the cleanſing of them, *will be filthy ſtill*; as if, to ſpeak in the Prophets Language, *They had made a Covenant with Death, and were at an Agreement with Hell.*

And whereas we have very good Laws for the ſuppreſſing of Vice, I will not ſay how very few have hitherto ſhewed, any thing of Zeal or an hearty Concern (notwithſtanding the higheſt Obligation) for the Execution of them: Nor from how many nothing is to be expected, but an extream Averſneſs to a Reformation.

But to come to the Buſineſs of theſe Papers: Certain pious Gentlemen, all of the Church of *England*, laying greatly to heart *theſe* things, reſolved to make Tryal, whether any thing could be done, towards the giving a Check to Debauchery and Profaneneſs; and joyntly agreed upon this following Method for the Reforming of Offenders in thoſe *Two* moſt ſcandalous Inſtances, by due Courſe of Law, *viz.*

Firſt, To endeavour the procuring of a Letter from the Queen (the King being then abſent) to the Juſtices of the Peace for the County of *Middleſex*, requiring them to put the Laws in Execution againſt *Drunkenneſs*, *Uncleanneſs*, *Swearing*, *Curſing*, *Profanation of the Lords Day*, &c.

Secondly, To endeavour the obtaining a *good Order of Seſſions* to be made thereon. And Her Majeſty having (like Her ſelf) moſt chearfully

fully granted the humble Requeſt of the Lord Biſhop of *Worceſter*, for ſuch a Letter; and having accordingly ſent a very pious and preſſing one to thoſe Juſtices; and the Juſtices having thereupon publiſh't an exceeding good Order, Theſe Gentlemen, encouraged with this good Succeſs;

Thirdly, Made it their Requeſt to many of their Acquaintance, whom they knew to be Sober and Religious Perſons, to give Information to ſome Juſtice of the Peace, of all Offences of the foremention'd Nature, which they ſhould obſerve to be committed; as by the *Order of Seſſions* they are encouraged to do.

And that all poſſible Eaſe might be given to the *Informers*, the *Juſtices*, and their *Clerks*:

1. They Printed Blank-Warrants againſt the ſeveral Offences.

2. They procured divers Perſons (to the Number of Eighteen or Twenty) inhabiting in convenient places of the City and Suburbs, to fill up ſuch Warrants, as the Caſe ſhould happen to be; for the Informers, who ſhould carry the ſame to the Juſtice; by which means he would have nothing more to do, but to Examine them upon Oath, and Sign and Seal the ſaid Warrants. And,

3. To eaſe the Juſtices Servant of the trouble of carrying every Warrant to the proper Officer, the Informer was to take his Warrant back with him to the Perſon who filled it up; from whom there was care taken to have it received & executed; as will appear preſently.

That the Penalties might be duly applyed to the uſe of the Poor, and not imbezel'd by the Conſtables or Church-wardens, they took this Method.

1. They directed every Perſon who filled up the Warrants, to keep an Account or Regiſter of the ſeveral Offenders Names, the Offence of each, the Time *when*, and Place *where* each Offence was committed:

mitted: And, when the Informer had brought him back the Warrant, to inſert alſo the Name of the Magiſtrate, before whom each Conviction was made;

2. They appointed a ſpecial Meſſenger, and paid him well for his pains, to Collect all the ſaid Warrants and Regiſters weekly; and, after they were ſorted, to carry them out again to the proper Officers of the ſeveral Pariſhes where they were to be executed; and to inſert the Names of the ſeveral Conſtables, to whom each of the ſaid Warrants ſhould be delivered, in the ſaid Regiſters.

3. They prepared an Abſtract of theſe Regiſters, to be preſented to the Juſtices at their *Petty-Seſſions*, for the enabling them to call every Conſtable to an Account, how he had executed the ſeveral Warrants he was Charged with in that Regiſter; and to what Churchwarden he had payd the Penalties by him levyed.

4. A ſhort Account was to be taken out of all thoſe Abſtracts, by which to Charge the ſeveral Church-wardens, at the making up of their Accounts with all the Money by them received on thoſe Warrants, in order to their ſending it to the ſeveral *Veſtries* once a Year.

And laſtly, To awaken all good Chriſtians throughout the Kingdom, Whether Magiſtrates or private Perſons, to a vigorous endeavour for a Reformation of Manners, They ſet the good Example of the Juſtices of *Middleſex*, and the following *as good a one*, of the Lord Mayor of *London*, and Court of Aldermen, before the reſt of the Nation. For which purpoſe they cauſed the Orders of the ſaid Seſſions and Court, to be Printed in a ſmaller Character; and of *theſe* they ſent ſeveral Thouſands throughout the Kingdom, *viz.* To moſt *Parliament-Men*, *Mayors*, *Bayliffs*, *Juſtices of the Peace*, *Miniſters*, *Coffee-houſes*, &c. and the Printing and Poſtage too were wholly at their own Charge.

And, Thanks be to God, they quickly ſaw extraordinary good Effects hereof, in the excellent Orders of the like nature, made by the

the Cities of *York*, &c. And by the Counties of *Surrey*, *Hertford*, *Buckingham*, *Bedford*, *Suſſex*, *Glouceſter*, the North-Riding of *Yorkſhire*, and divers others, of which many have been printed.

And there was perceived in a little time very good Succeſs of their Endeavours at home, by the manifeſt ceaſing in a great meaſure of the Profanation of the Lords Day; and the Awe that appeared upon many Common Swearers and Drunkards, who either felt, or had Notice of, the Execution of the Laws againſt ſuch Offenders.

But for as much as another ſort of Informers, who had been ſo buſie a few Years ſince, htah made that Name odious to inconſiderate People; and that the reſtraining of Licenciouſneſs, is ever extreamly grievous to the Licencious, 'twas neceſſary that the Juſtice ſhould be deſired by the Informer to conceal his Name from the Offender: There having been too many Inſtances of late, not unknown to the Juſtices, of thoſe, who, inſtead of amending by the gentle Puniſhment of *one* Sin, have added *more* to it, by reeking their Revenge on ſuch as Informed againſt them, with great Barbarity. I ſay the concealing the Informers Name, for *this* Reaſon, ought to be judged neceſſary; eſpecially when he is ready to appear, and prove the Fact to the Face of the Offender, in caſe he perſiſts in the denial of it. And Care was taken, that in *this* caſe the Informer ſhould adventure to appear, although the Law doth not oblige to it; as will be ſeen anon.

This is an exactly true, but imperfect Narrative of the undertaking of theſe Gentlemen; and is it poſſible it ſhould need a *Vindication?* Who would not now wonder that ſuch a Word as *this* ſhould be ſeen in our *Title-Page?* For can there be a Nobler Deſign laid, than that which is directly and ſolely for the Advancement of the Publick Good? And is not *that* Good, which comprehends both the Spiritual and Temporal Intereſt of the Publick, the incomparably greateſt Publick Good? And is not he a *Brute* who needs to be told, that *the Reformation of Mankind*, and *Running down of Vice*, is *ſuch* a Good as contains in it both theſe Intereſts? But *this* was the *onely* Deſign of this Undertaking. And it hath been ſhewed, that it was not limited to the Reformation of one *City*, or one *County*, but it ex-

tended to the whole *Kingdom*. And a due Countenance from thoſe who are principally obliged to encourage it, muſt needs cauſe it to have in time, an happy Influence upon both the *other* Kingdoms. And *Then*, how much farther in the World it may by Gods bleſſing reach, *HE* only knows.

Moreover, theſe Gentlemen were ſo far from deſigning to ſerve **Themſelves** by this **Undertaking**, that, as they were not capable of getting one Penny for their pains, ſo they expended in the carrying of it on, conſiderable Sums out of their own Purſes.

Nor can they with any Juſtice or Charity be cenſured, as deſigning the Applauſe of the Sober and Virtuous part of the Nation, (as highly as they deſerve it) for we are wholly beholden to their *Enemies* for our knowledge of ſo much as *One* of the Undertakers, or of the Undertaking it ſelf. And thoſe who received the Printed Orders all over the Kingdom, were perfectly Ignorant from whoſe hands they came.

And as to the foreſaid *Method* they agreed on, for the Managing of this Deſign, it as little needs a **Vindication** as the *Deſign it ſelf*; and is ſo far from being lyable to be taxed with Imprudence, that I (for my part) muſt needs profeſs, I greatly admire the Wiſdom of the Contrivance. I Challenge thoſe who dare to Reproach it, to ſhew *Any* Project better fitted for the Attainment of its End, than this throughout is. 'Tis ſcarce *Civil* to deſire them to Mend it *Themſelves*, ſince there is no Employment they can be more Averſe to.

In ſhort, 'tis a lamentable Inſtance of the Debauchery of the Age, That it is not a piece of great Impertinence to publiſh a Vindication of *Such* an **Undertaking**. But ſo it is, That the Clamours of Delinquents, which, where they are readily received, ſhall never be wanting, ſerved for an Occaſion to *Certain Gentlemen*, whoſe *Own* Converſations will not ſuffer them to be reconciled to the thoughts of a General Reformation, to Calumniate it, with the Perſons concerned in it; and to do their utmoſt to Overthrow it. All the Tales of puniſh'd Ale-Houſe-keepers and other Criminals, were by *Them* immediately received as *Goſpel*, when told by ſuch diſ-intereſſed and unbyaſt people; and hereupon they fall to Work. And no Wonder,

der, for if the Prince of *Darkneſs* had not *Now* beſtirr'd himſelf, to Baffle a Deſign ſo directly levelled againſt his Kingdom, this would doubtleſs have been the very *Firſt* time of his being unconcern'd upon ſuch an Occaſion.

And *Firſt* theſe Perſons ſatisfied themſelves a while with playing at *Small Game*; and among other moſt Notorious Untruths, they gave it out with great aſſurance, That there was a wonderfully gainful Office lately ſet up in *Lincolns Inn*, where Hundreds of Pounds were already gotten by the Erecters of it. And what great pity is it, provided the *Tempting Wages* could have reconciled them to ſuch *Loathſom Work*, that *Themſelves* had no intereſt in the Stock going there? By my conſent, they ſhould have had Shares *Gratis* upon that condition; nay, could they have been hired thereby not to *Hinder* Buſineſs, the Founders of the Office ſhould have done all the Drudgery, and *They* ſhould have all the Gains, but that the *Poor* ran away with every Farthing.

And, by the way, the Informers too who were engaged in this Undertaking, refuſed to receive a penny of the Penalties in thoſe Caſes wherein the Law alloweth them the *Third* part. They deſired no other Reward for ſo good a Work, than what they are ſure to have in the *Other* World, and would have only their *Labour for their Pains* in *This*.

And when it appeared to every body by the *Form* of the Warrants, that the Conſtables were to pay the Money they had Levyed upon Offenders, to the Church-Wardens, for the uſe of the Poor, the foreſaid perſons found that a *Lye* could do them very little Service, which was every whit as eaſily *detected* as *told*.

And now from Talking they proceed to Action, and 'tis well known how the *Firſt* Blow was given to this Undertaking; though ſeveral Worthy Juſtices of the *Peace*, to their Honour be it ſpoken, heartily interpoſed for the prevention of it.

In order to it, they in the firſt place fell very heavily on Mr. *Hartley*, a virtuous perſon, who had given as a Juſtice, all poſſible encouragement to this Beſt of Works. He was loaded with diverſe Accuſations of Injuſtice in his *Proceedings*; and thoſe on which the greateſt Weight was laid, were the *Two* following, wh

Reader may judge of the reſt. And perhaps they were both *True* as to matter of Fact, whatever they were as to their Faultineſs.

One was, That in one of his Warrants the Name of the Landlord of an Ale Houſe was inſerted inſtead of the Tenant's who kept the Houſe.

The other, That in another Warrant a Woman was called by the Name of her dead Husband, after ſhe was again Married.

Now as to the *Former*, it is ſaid, That the Landlord alſo liv'd in the Houſe; ſo that 'twas unknown to many which of them was Maſter of it: However, the Houſe was aſcertained in the Warrant, and the Offence againſt the Law, there committed, poſitively Sworn to

And as to the *Latter*, 'Tis ordinary among the meaner ſort, to call Women, at leaſt for ſome time after their ſecond Marriages, by the Names of their former Husbands: And thoſe who had not heard of the Husbands death, might without any great Offence preſume him to be ſtill Living. Nor was it neceſſary that all who knew of his Death, ſhould know that his Widow was a Wife again.

Theſe are the only Objections which we find particularly aſſign'd againſt Mr. *Hartley*'s proceedings, and therefore Unpardonable Faults no doubt! But the beſt of it is, they were the *Informer's* not the *Juſtice's*. But can any one of thoſe who have made ſuch ado with theſe two Trifles, make any body believe that *His* Juſticeſhip (if he be in Commiſſion) was never ſo impoſed on? He hath had very little Cuſtom, or very great Luck, if it never was. But old *Æſop* hath helpt us to a true Proverb: *It is an eaſie thing to find a Staff to beat a Dog*. But ſuppoſe theſe *Two* were Culpable Miſtakes, for want of due Caution, as thoſe who have made ſuch mighty matters of them, can't think them ſo in the *Juſtice*, and ſcarcely in the *Informers:* I wiſh they would ſeriouſly conſider, what means that Queſtion of our Bleſſed Saviour; *Why beholdeſt thou the Mote which is in thy Brothers Eye, and perceiveſt not the Bean that is in thine Own Eye?* O how happy would it be for, eſpecially ſome of *Them*, were *They* chargeable with no worſe Miſtakes, or lay they under the ſcandal of nothing worſe than Miſtakes!

Such *Little* things as *Theſe*, and which are as ſoon rectified as perceived,

ceived, would be eaſily over-look't for the ſake of the Greatneſs and Nobleneſs of the Undertaking, by all ſuch as heartily deſire a Reformation; nay, by thoſe who are but able to bear the thoughts of it: Nay, one would think too, by thoſe who, though they would fain have none, have ſo much Modeſty remaining, as to be aſhamed *Openly* to Oppoſe it. Which ſure none can have the impious Bravery to do, but ſuch as would make a true Story of the Fiction of the *Giants*, by deſignedly fighting againſt GOD Himſelf, if they believe there is one. And as it is eminently *HIS* Cauſe in which theſe Pious Gentlemen engaged themſelves; ſo no Chriſtian can doubt, nor ſcarce a hearty Theiſt, whether God hath a *Special* Hand in all Undertakings of this nature; nor whether thoſe who are employed in them are HIS *Inſtruments*; *Called*, *Spirited* and *Aſſiſted* by Him: I mean on ſuppoſition, that they carry on their Work by Lawful means, and tranſgreſs not the Bounds of thoſe Stations in which Providence hath placed them. But *Malice* it ſelf may be defied to ſhew any one Inſtance, wherein theſe perſons (the Undertakers I mean) have not ſtrictly kept to the obſervance of *Humane*, as well as the *Divine* Laws; or acted out of their own Sphere.

It is evident by the foreſaid Narrative, that there was nothing in their Undertaking, but what they had at leaſt *Liberty* from our Laws to do, nay, a *Commiſſion* (I mean a general one) from *GOD* to do; and the Queens Commiſſion too, may be eaſily made out of Her Majeſties moſt Gracious Letter, for what they have done; could they ſtand in any need of it.

As to any particular Objections againſt any part of the Proceedings of either the Undertakers or the Informers, the World will quickly be ſatisfied by a better hand, that they are both trifling and falſe; and therefore I will wholly wave them. Mr. *Hartley* will be alſo Vindicated from the other Objections made againſt him in the Execution of his Office; but I cannot forbear to touch upon *Two* more of *Theſe*.

One was, That he play'd the *Buſy-Body* in Acting out of his own *Diviſion*. And 'tis true, that he did *So* act, but not that he was a

Buſy-

Busy-Body in so doing. For, as he did it not but when 'twas *Necessary*, so he had expressly Violated his Justices Oath, if he had refused it.

The *Other* was, his Convicting Offenders, without bringing *Them* and their *Accusers* face to face. Now, besides what hath been said to *This* already, which shews the necessity of his frequently so doing, so the Law ought not to be understood as being against it: For the same *Magna Charta* which saith, That *No man shall be Condemned Unheard*; saith also, That *No man shall be disseized of his Goods or Life, but by a Tryal per Pares*, that is, by a Jury of Twelve Men; and if in This an Act of Parliament hath dispensed as to *Goods*, by impowering one Justice to Convict and to Levy by Distress, it may well be construed so to do in the *Former* Clause; especially when there is no proportion between the Crime and the Punishment: I mean, when the Crime is very *Great*, and the Punishment as *Little*; and *This* not to be inflicted but by a solemn Conviction upon the Oath of a Credible person, and in some cases of *Two*; and the Oaths likewise of such, as get not one Farthing of the Penalty.

This is as much as we design to say, relating to the *First* Blow that was given to this Undertaking. A *Second* soon followed it, and this proved a *Smart* one. And Gods will be done, if there is no remedy to be had. But there is little likelihood of *Any*, should Good Men be so sheepish, as to conceal, or only vent to one another, their sorrowful Resentment of fierce Oppositions to Reformation, and such an open Contempt as is now cast upon the best of Queens, in discountenancing a Design so well adapted to the promoting of the Business of her Excellent Letter; and of the great Encouragement given to Licencious publick Houses; of several instances of which, diverse *Bishops*, to their no small Trouble, have been Ear-Witnesses.

There is an Objection which hath been too often made against the Restraining of such Houses, *viz.* That their Majesties *Excise* will be greatly Lessened by this means. But who is able to think it can be Grateful to such a King and Queen as we are now Bless't with,

to

to have Their Revenue enlarged by the Sins of Their People? Who can be Ignorant, that there is nothing they would more Abominate? Or that their Majeſties do not need to be told, that their Revenue muſt moſt certainly be exceedingly diminiſhed by the *Poverty* of their Subjects; And nothing is more obſerved, than that that Multitudes of them do every year bring Themſelves and Families to a Morſel of Bread, by being permitted ſo much Drink; expreſly contrary to our Laws, which lay great Reſtraints upon Drinking-houſes, and Drinkers in them; not only on Sundays, but the Week-dayes too.

Poſſibly ſome may object againſt the Matter of theſe Pages, *that* Advice of the Poet:

Dum Furor in curſu eſt, &c.

When you ſee Fury ride full ſpeed,
Get out o'th' way of Fury's Steed.

And cenſure it as too Heady an Act, now Vice is ſo Rampant, *thus* to expoſe our ſelves to the Rage of the Vicious.

But it may be replyed, That whoſoever is heartily concerned at Vice's being now ſo Rampant, muſt have the Soul of a *Nit*, if he fears looking it in the Face in ſuch a Reign as *this*. If he be more afraid of Debauchees and Profane Perſons in King *William*'s and Q. *Mary*'s Reign, than many were of Papiſts and Jeſuites in King *James*'s. Or apprehends more danger in Attacquing thoſe *now*, than theſe *then*, without the Leave of a Licenſer.

And as to the *Governments* having any Reaſon to be afraid of provoking them, I add to what is ſaid in the *Preface*, that Vice is a Daſtardly Cow-hearted thing, and always ſneaks when bravely born up to; having nothing to plead in its own Defence. But could vicious Men invent any thing to ſay for themſelves, they are ſtill *ſelf-condemned*. Their Vices alſo make them too ſoft and effeminate, to carry on with any Vigour a dangerous Deſign. Nor can they confide in one another, in laying a Conſpiracy, as having no Principle to ſecure Fidelity: So that there is not the leaſt Fear of

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their being too hard for the ſober part of the Nation; of which I hope there are an Hundred to one on the ſide of the Government.

Were thoſe who bear an implacable Enmity to any thing of Reformation, onely injurious to *their own* Souls, the Charity we have for them, might have forbidden us to be ſilent, upon ſuch an occaſion as is now given us; much leſs then can we have any Temptation to be ſhy of Offending them, when we conſider how extreamly the Publick, and Their Majeſties Great Affairs have ſuffered by them, and are ſtill like to ſuffer; and what heavy Judgments ought to be expected from a moſt highly Provoked God, for the Toleration of ſo much Wickedneſs, after as great Obligations as ever were laid upon a Nation.

Now the *Third* Time draws on a pace, when He, who is *the Light of our Eyes, and the Breath of our Noſtrils*, deſigns to expoſe his Sacred Perſon for our Safety, and the Well-fare of all Chriſtendom, to ſuch Dangers as nothing but the Courage of a Matchleſs Heroe could encounter: And therefore 'tis *more* than time, that a more effectual Courſe than ever be taken to run down thoſe Enemies at home (our Reigning Sins) which may do, thro' God's juſt Judgment, our Potent Enemy abroad more Service, than all the Preparations he hath made againſt us. And in Order thereunto, to take all poſſible Care, that none be intruſted with the Buſineſs of Reforming *others*, who need as much as *any* to be Reformed *themſelves*. As alſo to give all Encouragement to thoſe, whoſe hearts God hath inclined to give their Helping Hand to a Work of ſuch Abſolute Neceſſity. We may be much afraid to think of the King's again leaving us, before this be done, or at leaſt a doing.

POST-SCRIPT.

AND, Thanks be to GOD, and Their Majeſties, ſince this was written comes the happy News, of this Work's being again encouraged, by a moſt pious Proclamation, and that ſince follow'd by a conſiderable Alteration in the Commiſſion of the Peace for *Middleſex* and *Weſtminſter*, by Her Majeſties ſpecial Command; wherein are placed moſt of thoſe Gentlemen, who are lately become known to have been concerned in this Noble Undertaking: And I pray God the Succeſs of it may be Anſwerable to Her Majeſties pious Deſign. *FINIS.*